

Tornado Preparedness Guide

Created by the Office of Congressman Bart Gordon

Before a Tornado Strike...

I. Prepare a Home Tornado Plan.

- Pick a place where family members could gather if a tornado is headed your way. It could be your basement or, if there is no basement, a center hallway, bathroom, or closet on the lowest floor. Keep this place uncluttered.
- If you are in a high-rise building, you may not have enough time to go to the lowest floor. Pick a place in a hallway in the center of the building.

II. Assemble a Disaster Supplies Kit Containing:

- (Very important!) Weather radio, which are inexpensive and can be purchased at your local hardware store. They provide information about local weather hazards that can be life-saving.
- (Very important!) Written instructions on how to turn off electricity, gas, and water if authorities advise you to do so. (Remember, you'll need a professional to turn natural gas service back on.)
- First aid kit and essential medications.
- At least three gallons of water per person.
- Protective clothing, bedding, or sleeping bags.
- Battery-powered radio, flashlight, and extra batteries.
- Special items for infant, elderly, or disabled family members.

III. Stay Tuned for Storm Warnings.

- Know what a tornado WATCH and WARNING means:
 - A tornado WATCH means a tornado is possible in your area.
 - A tornado WARNING means a tornado has been sighted and may be headed for your area.
- Tornado WATCHES and WARNINGS are issued by county.

When a Tornado WATCH Is Issued...

- Listen to your weather radio, a standard radio, or local TV news for updated storm information.
- Look for the following danger signs like: dark, often greenish sky; large hail; a large, dark, low-lying cloud (particularly if rotating); and/or, a loud roar, similar to a freight train.

When a Tornado WARNING Is Issued AND....

I. You are in a structure (e.g. residence, small building, school, nursing home, hospital, factory, shopping center, high-rise building) then...

- Go to a pre-designated shelter area such as a safe room, basement, storm cellar, or the lowest building level. If there is no basement, go to the center of an interior room on the lowest level (closet, interior hallway) away from corners, windows, doors, and outside walls. Put as many walls as possible between you and the outside. Get under a sturdy table and use your arms to protect your head and neck. Do not open windows.

II. You are in a vehicle, trailer, or mobile home then...

- Get out immediately and go to the lowest floor of a sturdy, nearby building or a storm shelter. Mobile homes, even if tied down, offer little protection from tornadoes.

III. You are outside with no shelter then...

- Lie flat in a nearby ditch or depression and cover your head with your hands. Be aware of the potential for flooding.
- Do not get under an overpass or bridge. You are safer in a low, flat location.
- Never try to outrun a tornado in urban or congested areas in a car or truck. Instead, leave the vehicle immediately for safe shelter.
- Watch out for flying debris. Flying debris from tornadoes causes most fatalities and injuries.

After the Tornado Passes...

- (Very important!) Do not use candles at any time. Tornadoes often damage gas lines, resulting in gas leaks that combined with a candle flame can spark a fire.
- Watch out for fallen power lines and stay out of the damaged area.
- Listen to your weather radio or a standard radio for information and instructions.
- Use a flashlight to inspect your home for damage.